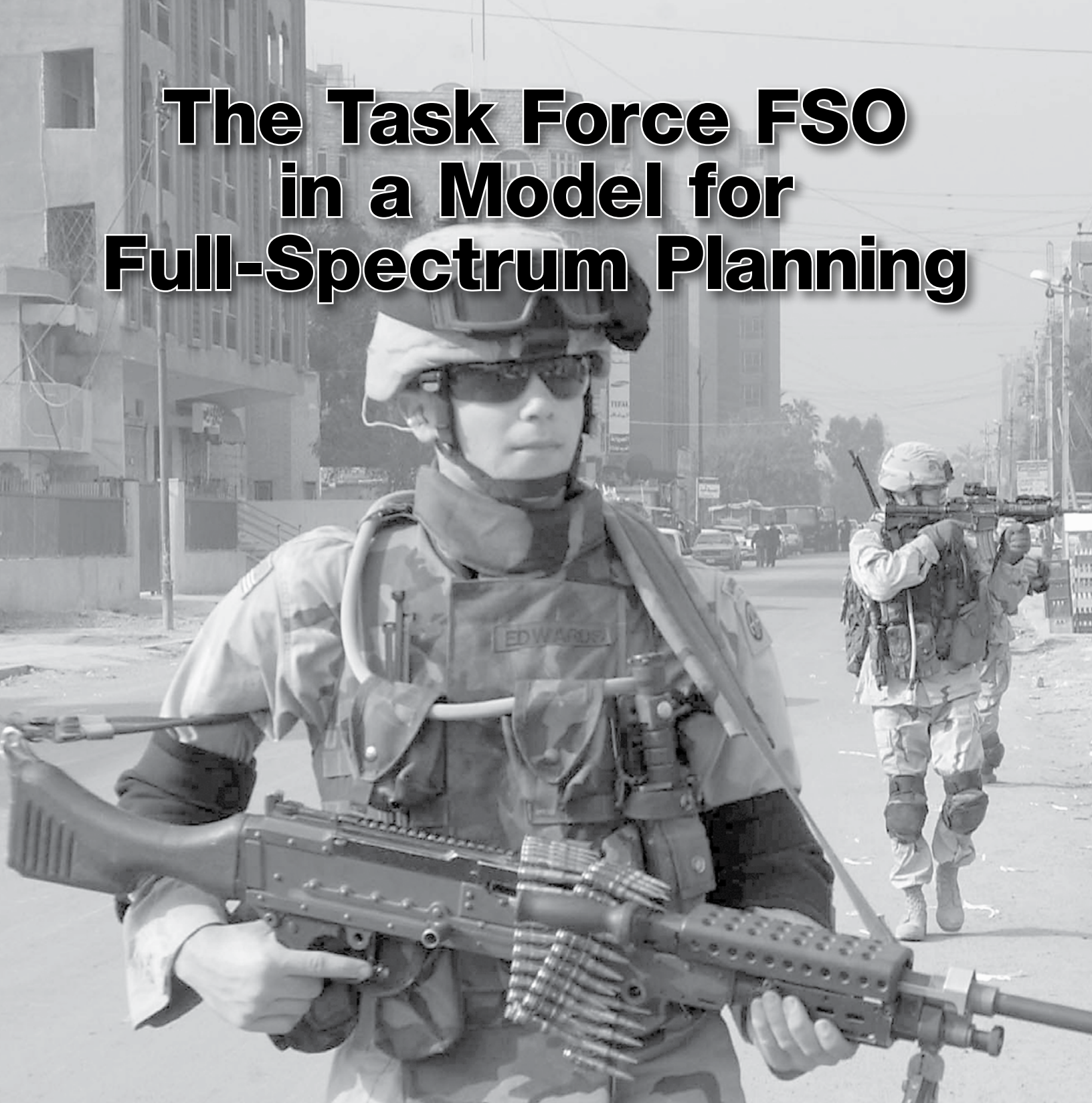
The Task Force FSO in a Model for Full-Spectrum Planning



By Major Christopher D. Compton

The fire support officer (FSO) always has been a crucial player in a maneuver battalion task force's ability to synchronize combat power at the critical time and place on the battlefield. As the US enters the fourth year of fighting the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT), it is increasingly important to examine the task force FSO's role as it applies to the conditions in which leaders must plan, prepare, execute and assess combat operations in the contemporary operational environment (COE).

While the FSO remains an important member of the task force battle staff, the scope of his duties and responsibilities has changed. Several major factors are driving this change. First, as the Army moves through the full range of military operations in the COE and finds itself somewhere between war and peace, conditions have demanded all leaders focus on both lethal and nonlethal effects.

Second, Army leaders have made several radical changes in organization and doctrine to make the force more effective in the COE. Most notably, the modularity concept has changed the focus of attention at the tactical level from division to brigade. Modular brigades are better

Photo by PFC Mike Pryor, 82nd Airborne Division Public Affairs

resourced to take on the elements of both the lethal and nonlethal fights and are now more capable of conducting full-spectrum operations for a sustained period of time.

Third, the volume of information collected and analyzed from the bottom up has increased dramatically in the COE. This important factor has caused leaders to engage nearly all available assets in the collection and analysis of information. At the task force level, commanders are forced to organize their staffs to more effectively manage information collected throughout their battlespace. Fire supporters certainly play a key role in this process on their maneuver battle staffs.

In the task force, the FSO no longer is responsible only for performing the traditional duties of planning, coordinating and synchronizing lethal fire support. While this remains the FSO's primary focus in the COE, the task force commander sees his FSO as a critical link to integrating and synchronizing lethal and nonlethal effects. He relies heavily on the FSO to fulfill this vital role on the battle staff.

Defining the Problem. As task force FSOs assume this expanded role, they face several sources of friction that hinder their abilities to coordinate successful effects on the battlefield. Lack of training at both the collective and individual levels causes most of this friction.

First, most battalion-level staffs do not have experience in planning full-spectrum operations in a sustained high-operational tempo (OPTEMPO) environment. Task force staffs are very good at planning sequential, short-duration, lethal-focused missions; however, they lack the management systems, (primarily for establishing organization and routine) to conduct sustained planning that focuses on accomplishing the commander's objectives through the integration and synchronization of lethal and nonlethal effects. This training and experience gap results in a plan that is neither fully integrated nor synchronized across all battlefield operating systems (BOS) and, ultimately, fails to achieve the commander's intent fully.

Second, Field Artillery (FA) officers assigned to traditional FSO positions do not train adequately to fulfill this redefined role on the battle staff. Likewise, although most maneuver commanders recognize their FSO is uniquely qualified to understand doctrinal planning processes and the importance of coordination and synchronization, they don't fully understand how to employ an FSO in this role.

As a result, the FSO doesn't know how to communicate his new responsibilities to the commander, and the commander doesn't know what to expect from the FSO. This leads to obvious command and control problems, including, but not limited to, a lack of prioritization, unfocused taskings, the misuse of assets, poor intelligence collection and overall missed opportunities for success.

Evidence of these problems is becoming increasingly more noticeable, especially at the task force level, as commanders realize the importance of synchronizing lethal and nonlethal effects to accomplish an objective. This has a tremendous impact on decisive and shaping operations.

The Solution. Because these problems stem from a lack of doctrinal-based training, we must reexamine our doctrine to ensure it remains relevant to today's environment where units at all levels must integrate and synchronize lethal and nonlethal effects. While the doctrinal framework for planning and decision making remains unchanged, commanders and staffs must adopt new techniques for conducting the operational process to fit the continuously changing environment.

Field Manual (FM) 5-0 Army Planning and Orders Production provides the doctrine for decision making that helps commanders and staffs assess a situation, reach logical conclusions and make informed decisions. We need to revisit the fundamentals discussed in FM 5-0 and synthesize methods that apply to doctrinal decision-making processes to meet the demands of the evolving COE. We must learn how to apply doctrine in full-spectrum operations.

The military decision-making process (MDMP) and the *decide-detect-deliver-assess* (D^3A) or targeting process are our doctrinal planning methods. They guide commanders and staffs to logical, informed decisions to accomplish the missions while concurrently mitigating unnecessary risks and most effectively using limited assets. See Figure 1 for an illustration of how these processes are

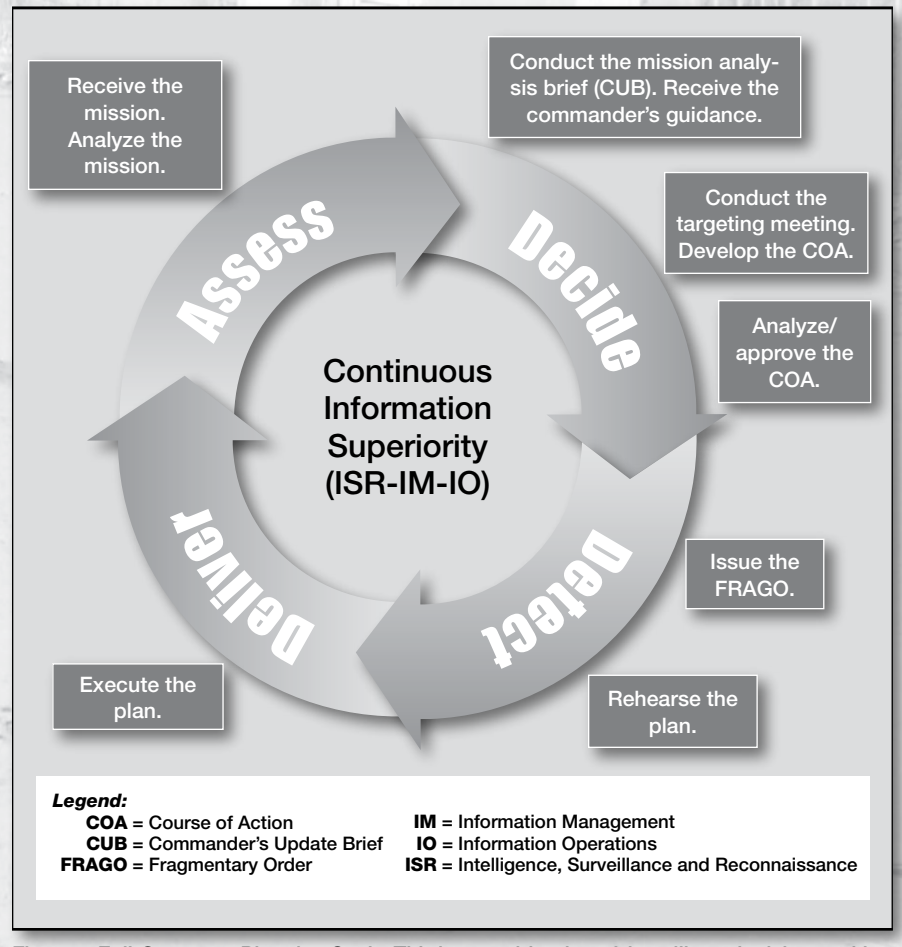


Figure 1: Full-Spectrum Planning Cycle. This is a combination of the military decision-making process (MDMP) and the decide, detect, deliver and assess (D^3A) targeting process.

1. Receive the mission./Conduct mission analysis.[a]

- Integrated BOS analyze the data.
- Staff updates the estimates.
- Intel updates the IPB.

FSO: Running Estimate

- Determine the specified/implied/essential tasks.
- Determine the facts/assumptions.
- Determine the constraints/restrictions.
- Determine the available lethal/nonlethal assets.
- Conduct a targeting assessment.
  - Assess the HPTs (TSM).
  - Review or refine the HPTL.
  - Review or refine the MOEs.
- Conduct a fire support assessment.
  - Refine/establish the targets.
  - Refine the observation plan.
  - Refine/establish the FSCMs.
- Conduct a nonlethal assessment.
  - Town's status (CMO analysis)
  - IO themes
  - Negotiations Required
  - Projects and Funds
- Recommend the EETs.

2. Brief the mission analysis (CUB)./Receive the commander's guidance.

- Staff briefs the estimates to the commander.
- BOS make recommendations.
- Commander issues/updates his guidance.

FSO: Information for the CUB

- Lethal/Nonlethal Asset Status
- Fire Support Plan Update
  - Targets
  - Observers
  - FSCMs
- Nonlethal Information Update
  - Town's Assessment (CMO Analysis)
  - IO Themes and Messages
  - Negotiations
  - Projects and Funds
- Targeting Update (HPTL)
  - TSM
  - HPTL
- Recommended EETs (Task and Purpose)

Commander's Guidance for the FSO

- Approve/refine the targeting objectives.
- Approve/refine the HPTL.[b]
- Approve the EETs.
- Issue the BOS' planning guidance.

3. Develop the COA./Conduct the targeting meeting.[c]

- Develop the integrated COA concept.
- Draft the TSM.
- Draft the products/annexes.
- Write the COA statement and produce the sketches.

FSO: Targeting Meeting

- Draft the fire support plan.
  - Targets
  - Observers
  - FSCMs
- Draft the nonlethal plan.
  - Town's Assessment (CMO Analysis)
  - IO Themes and Messages
  - Negotiations
  - Projects and Funds
- Draft targeting decisions (complete the TSM).
- Draft the EETs.

4. Analyze the COA.[d]/Receive the commander's COA approval.[e]

- Conduct an integrated wargame.
  - Finalize the TSM.
  - Finalize the products/annexes.
  - Brief the COA to the commander for his approval.

FSO: Wargame

- Synchronize the fire support plan.
  - Targets
  - Observers
  - FSCMs
- Synchronize the nonlethal plan (TSM).
  - Town's Assessment (CMO Analysis)
  - IO Themes and Messages
  - Negotiations
  - Projects and Funds
- Finalize the targeting decisions (TSM).
- Finalize the EETs.

5. Issue the FRAGO.

- Develop the FRAGO in the doctrinal OPORD format.
- Include annexes, as needed.
- Brief subordinates on the FRAGO.

FSO: Orders Production Checklist

- EETs—Paragraph 3 (a) (2)
- Annex D
  - Target List Worksheet
  - Fire Support Execution Matrix
  - TSM
  - Fire Support Overlay
- Annexes R, U, V (As Needed)[f]
  - Nonlethal Effects Support Matrix
  - Town's Assessment (CMO Analysis)
  - IO Themes and Messages
  - Negotiations Schedule/Guidelines
  - Projects and Funds

6. Rehearse the Plan.

- Conduct a combined arms rehearsal of lethal and nonlethal effects.
- Conduct a fire support rehearsal.

FSO: Products for Rehearsals

- EETs
- Fire Support Pan
  - PLOT-CR Format
  - FSCMs
- Nonlethal Effects Plan
  - Concept of Support (by Asset)
  - IO Themes and Messages
  - Negotiations
  - Projects and Funds

7. Execute the plan./Assess the results of the plan.

- Execute the plan.
- Conduct MOE analysis.

FSO: Execution/Assessment Considerations

- FSO's Location during Execution
- Command and Control of Fires and Assets
- Reporting/Information Management
- Continued Analysis

Legend:

BOS = Battlefield Operating Systems
CMO = Civil-Military Operations
COA = Course of Action
CUB = Commander's Update Briefing
EETs = Essential Effects Tasks
FRAGO = Fragmentary Order
FSCMs = Fire Support Coordinating Measures
FSO = Fire Support Officer
HPTL = High-Payoff Target List
HPTs = High-Payoff Targets
IO = Information Operations
IPB = Intelligence Preparation of the Battlefield
MDMP = Military Decision-Making Process
MOEs = Measures of Effectiveness
OPORD = Operations Order
PLOT-CR = Purpose, Location, Observer, Trigger, Communications and Rehearsal
TSM = Target Synchronization Matrix

End Notes:

a. This step and the staff running estimates are a continuous process after the initial mission. As new missions are received or the effectiveness of old missions are assessed, Step 2, "Brief the mission analysis./Receive the Commander's Guidance," for all intents, becomes the first step in the MDMP/targeting cycle.

b. Because of the nature of a sustained high-operational tempo (OPTEMPO) environment where the commander must focus on specific objectives and prioritize limited assets, targeting drives the COA. Specifically, the HPTL becomes the "directed COA."

c. Note that the medium to develop the COA for lethal/nonlethal military operations is the targeting meeting.

d. "Analyze the COA," which synchronizes the COA, can be conducted immediately following the targeting meeting in Step 3 or as a continuation of the meeting with all BOS present.

e. Because the nature of the operational environment demands a directed COA, a decision briefing for the commander may not be necessary. However, he must approve the plan.

f. The FSO gathers these annexes or writes them as directed by the S3.

Figure 2: The Battalion/Task Force FSO's Role in Planning Integrated Lethal and Nonlethal Military Operations—Full-Spectrum Operations

integrated in full-spectrum planning.

How commanders choose to integrate these processes and apply them to given situations depends on the operational environments in which they find themselves. This article proposes a model to integrate the MDMP and targeting processes. See Figure 2 for the steps in the full-spectrum planning process at the task force level and the FSO's role in each step.

An EBO Approach. During the last several years, leaders at all levels across all branches have discussed the applicability of EBO to describe the process by which tactical units plan, prepare, execute and assess combat operations in the COE. Put simply, EBO focuses on integrating and synchronizing lethal and nonlethal *effects* in a continuous operational process to achieve the commander's objective(s).

There also has been much discussion about what level of the chain of command conducts EBO and to what operations the term applies. Regardless of what we call it, the effects-based approach is critical to the success of the task force in full-spectrum operations.

Here are some fundamentals for full-spectrum planning.

• *Establish information superiority.* Leaders agree that control of the information environment is the foundation for success in full-spectrum operations. *FM 3-0 Operations says*, "information superiority is the operational advantage derived from the ability to collect, process and disseminate an uninterrupted flow of information while exploiting or denying an adversary's ability to do the same."

A commander who is expecting to achieve desired effects on the battlefield must make an intensive effort to gain the operational advantages derived from information superiority: better, faster friendly decisions; degradation of enemy decisions; and consideration of his actions' impact upon the enemy and others' perceptions and attitudes. But he must focus his staff properly to do it.

First, the commander must push his staff routinely to collect, process, integrate, analyze, evaluate and interpret information to generate actionable intelligence. Second, each staff member must focus on how he specifically supports the three components of information superiority: intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR); information management (IM); and information operations (IO).

• *Maintain a running staff estimate.* To make informed decisions, the commander relies on his staff's recommendations based on an analysis of the most current information available. In a sustained high-OPTEMPO environment, the staff must maintain a running estimate that tracks and analyzes information over a long period of time. This is critical to the unit's ability to gain and maintain information superiority and provides the foundation for each staff member to participate effectively in each step of the doctrinal planning process.

Developing specific information covered in a running estimate is critical and addresses another key problem identified earlier. Through a clearly defined running estimate, the FSO will be able to communicate his responsibilities to the commander, and the commander will understand what to expect from the FSO.

• *Develop the FSO's estimate.* The FSO must design his running estimate to employ the fires BOS in a way that achieves the commander's intent. Additionally, as the battle staff's resident expert on the targeting process, the FSO must gather information from each BOS and other tactical enablers that work to achieve specific lethal and nonlethal targeting objectives. This includes managing information for the commander that's collected and analyzed by nonlethal assets, if the task force is allocated any nonlethal assets.

Maintaining a situation map and briefing boards with available fire support assets is not enough. The estimate must link to the running operations estimate, supporting the commander's ability to make decisions during maneuver operations so he can gain information dominance. See "FSO: Running Estimate" in Step 1 of Figure 2 for the information that may be included in an FSO's running estimate.

Because a maneuver task force staff has no organic S5 or S7, commanders often call on their FSOs to coordinate and synchronize these critical nonlethal functions. Regardless of whether or not the commander pins this responsibility on the FSO, a good fire supporter must balance the scope of his estimate to address both traditional lethal fire support duties and the elements of the nonlethal fight.

This requires the FSO to understand the capabilities of nonlethal effects-producing assets. Just as the FSO must understand the use of artillery, mortars, close air support (CAS) and attack aviation to achieve desired lethal effects, he also must understand the use of psychological operations (PSYOP), civil affairs (CA) and IO to achieve the desired nonlethal effects. The information is an important part of the FSO's running estimate.

Information in the FSO's estimate is tracked continuously and analyzed during each step of the FSO's planning process. The tracked information also serves as his scope of responsibility, clearly defining his role in supporting the commander on the battle staff. Ultimately, the FSO uses the estimate to recommend and develop essential effects tasks (EETs) discussed in greater detail later in this article.

The FSO's running estimate, along with the rest of the staff's running estimates, serves as the foundation for the commander's initial visualization of the battlefield and eventual intent to accomplish the mission by achieving desired effects. Solid running estimates enhance the commander's ability to focus planning and the staff's ability to develop a logical and complete plan.

• *Effects planning starts with the commander.* Chapter 1, FM 5-0 discusses the fundamentals of planning for full-spectrum operations. The first is that "Commanders focus planning." This is the most critical fundamental and the entry point of the doctrinal planning process.

Commanders continually focus planning by providing an objective-focused visualization to supply answers to key questions that emerge from staff planning: "Where are we now?" "Where do we want to be?" and "How do we get there?"

The first visualization question—"Where are we now?"—is *information* focused. The FSO and the rest of the staff help the commander answer this question by providing him timely, analyzed information in the running estimates. This leads to situational understanding and a common operational picture (COP) and gives the commander the ability to focus planning by developing his commander's critical information requirements (CCIR) that will guide his decision making throughout the operation.

The second visualization question is *objective* focused. The commander must focus planning by visualizing the end state. Answering, "Where do we want to be?" gives the staff the ability to develop a course of action (COA) focused on the commander's objective. This

objective becomes the targeting focus for the staff by which desired effects are determined for approved high-payoff targets (HPTs).

The final visualization question is *effects* focused: "How do we get there?" To achieve the commander's objective (Where do we want to be?), a series of desired effects must be achieved (How do we get there?). Commanders focus planning by establishing targeting priorities and providing the staff guidance on what effects must be achieved to be successful.

The FSO helps in this process by recommending targeting priorities and desired effects, but the commander must approve these recommendations. The approved priorities form the HPT list (HPTL), and the approved effects become the foundation for the FSO's EETs.

The FSO and the Planning Cycle. Full-spectrum planning occurs in a continuous cycle as units execute the two doctrinal planning processes: MDMP and targeting. These processes drive the task force commander and staff to a final product that is fully integrated and synchronized, and, at the same time, focused on achieving objectives through a series of desired lethal and nonlethal effects.

The following are some principles that integrate the two processes for full-spectrum planning.

• *Integrate MDMP and targeting.* While the MDMP is a proven problem-solving process, targeting focuses specific assets on specific targets in accordance with the priorities and objectives established by the commander to solve the problem.

The targeting process distracts many people by inducing a false perception that it is based on the completion of a complex matrix. Targeting is certainly more than a matrix; however, the most effective tool to manage the commander's targeting objectives is the target synchronization matrix (TSM).

The TSM is simply a graphic representation of the unit's plans to achieve the commander's targeting objectives. Figure 3 is an example of a TSM for full-spectrum operations.

The TSM is neither a synchronized COA nor an execution matrix. It is, however, a valuable planning tool for the commander (and subordinate commanders) that displays useful information about his targeting priorities (HPTs); the assets and methods used to detect, deliver and assess each HPT; and the quantifiable effects to be achieved to satisfy his requirements for success. Ultimately, the

Item #1

	Unit	AO	Target Objective/ LOO Category	MOE	HPT
Decide	TF 1-1 IN	Scorpion (Medinal Jabal)	Defeat insurgents.	Reduce mortar attacks on FOB Denver by 75%.	AIF Mortars

	Asset	Method	When
Detect	1. A FIST 2. Q-36 Radar 3. A Co Cdr	1. Occupy OP1 NLT 070600MAR05 and observe TAI 1 (AB2012). 2. AOS is 4800 mils from 2100-0100. 3. Coordinate joint patrol with the Iraqi Police.	7 Mar 05
Deliver	1. A Co 2. Mtr Plt 3. PSYOP Team	1. Conduct combat patrol in TAI 1 from 2100-0100. Conduct joint patrol from 1900-2300 in Medina Jabal. 2. Fire AB2012 when mortars are detected. 3. Deliver leaflets (focus on AIF mortar activities) NLT 1300.	7 Mar 05

	Asset	Method	When	MOE Indicators
Assess	A Co	(If fired) patrol the CF grid and assess the BDA; debrief with S2/FSO upon completion; negotiate with the mayor, focusing on the success of the joint patrols and status of the AIF mortar activities.	8 Mar 08	Number of acquisitions, amount of weapons and ammunition found, number of reports of mortar or related insurgent activities.

Item #2

	Unit	AO	Target Objective/ LOO Category	MOE	HPT
Decide	TF 1-1 IN	Scorpion (Al Sharq)	Provide essential services.	Increase availability of electricity from 50% to 100%.	Talaat Shameel Ajja'Fari (Mayor)

	Asset	Method	When
Detect	1. TF Cdr 2. TF S4/CA	1. Negotiate with the mayor to verify the town's need for a generator. 2. Determine the size and type of generator needed.	7 Mar 05
Deliver	TF S4/BMO/ CA	Receive and install the generator.	TBD

	Asset	Method	When	MOE Indicators
Assess	CA	Poll the citizens to determine the initial effects of the new generator.	TBD	Number of hours of electricity per 24-hour period, number of complaints or accolades received by the town leadership; number of positive/negative responses during CA polling.

Legend:

AIF = Anti-Iraqi Forces
AOS = Azimuth of Search
BDA = Battle Damage Assessment
BMO = Battalion Maintenance Officer
CA = Civil Affairs Team
Cdr = Commander
CF = Counterfire
Co = Company
FIST = Fire Support Team
FOB = Forward Operating Base
HPT = High-Payoff Target
IN = Infantry
LOO = Line of Operation
MOEs = Measures of Effectiveness
Mtr = Mortar
NLT = Not Later Than
PL = Platoon Leader
Plt = Platoon
PSYOP = Psychological Operations
OP = Observation Post
TAI = Target Area of Interest
TBD = To Be Determined
TF = Task Force

Figure 3: Two Sample Items of a 24-Hour Target Synchronization Matrix (TSM) for Lethal and Nonlethal Effects

TSM becomes the source for developing EETs. The FSO's role in developing the TSM and subsequent EETs is a key part of the planning process.

Units typically struggle in their attempts to integrate the MDMP and targeting into one smooth process that both maximizes the time available to the commander and staff and produces an acceptable, complete product for subordinate units. Implementing a battle rhythm eases this struggle by lending efficiency to an otherwise difficult-to-manage OPTEMPO.

• *Establish a sustained high-OPTEMPO battle rhythm.* As one applies a doctrinal planning framework to this environment where information superiority is critical, the first step is to develop a battle rhythm. Establishing a battle rhythm always has been an important ingredient in making any staff effective.

In the COE, full-spectrum planning is an information-intensive and long-term process. It requires a unit to plan continuously over a sustained period of time (at least 365 days, in most cases) for a wide range of military operations, most likely in the same general geographical location.

Battle rhythm allocates specific times to perform each step of the doctrinal planning process in a routine way, allowing the staff to establish a fully integrated and synchronized plan that uses actionable intelligence and focuses on achieving desired effects. The cycle time can (and should) be modified to meet the unit's operational demands.

The unit's ability to accomplish routine tasks routinely is key to success. Without routine, a unit is unable to plan proactively and conduct operations focused on achieving the commander's objectives. It will be reactive to guidance from higher headquarters and critical events occurring in its area of operations (AO).

The most important command/staff action in establishing a battle rhythm remains fielding sound standing operating procedures (SOP). Units must evaluate their SOPs to validate their utility for continued use in sustained high-OPTEMPO environments.

Once the battle rhythm is established, the FSO and each staff member must understand what he brings to the table for each step of the process. This includes understanding what input and output products are necessary for each staff member and what decisions must be made during each step. Figure 2 includes the FSO's inputs and outputs for each step of the planning cycle model.

• *Maximize the value of the commander's update brief (CUB)—situational update/mission analysis.* When entering the planning cycle, beginning with the initial mission receipt and mission analysis (Step 1 of Figure 2) is logical in the MDMP. In this model, the staff's responsibilities remain unchanged from the guidelines established in FM 5-0.

However, in a sustained operational environment, staffs must revisit this first step on a recurring basis—they are constantly analyzing information related to a new or old mission. If a unit receives a new mission from higher headquarters, the staff analyzes the information and, in Step 2, makes new recommendations to the commander based on its analysis. This running mission analysis consists of the integrated updated staff estimates, provides the foundation for the commander's visualization and answers the first critical question: "Where are we now?" The CUB presents the products of a running mission analysis within the framework of a battle rhythm.

In other words, the CUB plays a double role as the subordinate unit leader's situational update briefing and the staff's mission analysis brief to the commander. The briefing must be a coordinated effort across all BOS in which each participant presents analyzed information to the commander, emphasizing the impact on current and future operations. Input from both the staff and subordinate unit leaders gives the commander the clearest operational picture available and puts the unit's leaders and staff on the "same sheet of music."

From a targeting perspective, aspects of the assess function and the initial requirements for the *decide* function occur at this point in the cycle. Although assessment is a continuous process, staff must provide feedback to the commander on his targeting objectives because the plan hinges on the unit's ability to accomplish those objectives. Likewise, as new and relevant information from the targeting assessments is analyzed continuously, the commander validates his objectives and priorities.

As expected, the task force FSO plays a key role in this part of the planning cycle. As the commander's targeting expert, he not only recommends targeting objectives, but also comprehensively lays out both lethal and nonlethal considerations for the commander, based on analyzed information from his running estimate. At a minimum, the FSO briefs the commander on the information listed in "FSO: Information for the CUB" in Step 2.

After the CUB, the commander approves any changes to the recommended HPTL and EETs and issues planning guidance to the staff concerning new or revised targeting objectives. This guidance is the foundation for the targeting meeting/COA development in Step 3.

• *Develop the COA (targeting meeting) with a high payoff.* Once the staff receives the commander's planning guidance, it is ready to move to Step 3 in the planning cycle: COA development. This step is best achieved through a fully integrated targeting effort by the staff—a targeting meeting.

Because the nature of a sustained high-OPTEMPO environment forces the commander to focus on specific objectives and prioritize the use of his limited assets, targeting drives the COA. Therefore, COA development begins with the staff addressing the commander's targeting objectives, specifically the approved HPTL with effects from the CUB, which serves as a "directed COA."

The targeting meeting is a focused effort by the entire battle staff and not the responsibility of a select few individuals under the FSO's control. While the FSO certainly plays a key role in targeting, the task force executive officer (XO) should lead the staff through these planning steps.

The targeting meeting begins where the CUB left off: restating the commander's priorities in the form of the approved HPTL and desired effects for each target. The battle staff then proceeds through the doctrinal steps of COA development, simultaneously addressing each targeting function (*decide, detect, deliver and assess*).

The end state must be an integrated COA that is feasible, acceptable, suitable, distinguishable and complete. In addition to COA statements and sketches, a completed draft of the TSM shows how the COA addresses each targeting function and, ultimately, achieves the commander's targeting objectives. The FSO translates these targeting objectives into EETs.

• *Develop EETs.* For the FSO, the most important output of the targeting meeting is the list of draft EETs communicating the commander's targeting objectives in a format subordinates will understand.

For more than a decade, instructors at the Field Artillery School, observer/controllers (O/Cs) at each of the combat

training centers (CTCs) and fire support coordinators (FSCOORDs) at the brigade level and below emphasized the importance of the essential fire support task (EFST). Officers attending the FA Captain's Career Course (FACCC) learned the intricate details of how to develop, implement and execute an EFST. Students quickly understood that the EFST plays a vital role in the maneuver plan, even causing the commander to change his plan if the EFST is not accomplished.

Just as the COE has demanded a change in the task force FSO's scope of responsibility, it also has demanded a change in the products required to capture the commander's intent regarding lethal and nonlethal effects. It's necessary to communicate a concept for accomplishing the commander's targeting objectives, using the same basic methodology used to develop the EFST.

The impact of the new EET stays the same. Just as failure to accomplish an EFST forces the commander to change his plan, the same is true about the EET. Moreover, the general format of the EET also remains consistent: Task, Purpose, Method and Effect.

So, what has changed? With the unit focused on accomplishing the commander's targeting objectives, EETs capture the details required to achieve desired lethal and (or) nonlethal effects on HPTs established by the commander. A properly completed TSM provides much of the detail needed to develop an EET. (See Figure 3 on Page 26.) An EET's Task, Purpose and Effect are derived from the *decide* function identified at the top of Figure 3. The Method is derived from the *detect, deliver* and *assess* functions, also in Figure 3. For an example of an EET derived from the TSM in Figure 3, see Figure 4. Note that Figure 4 integrates lethal and nonlethal actions to accomplish the targeting objective.

The Task of an EET describes the desired targeting objective on a specific HPT and is formulated by using the familiar Objective-Formation-Function format.

The Purpose statement continues to be maneuver-focused like the EFST. The Purpose is tied to the commander's targeting objective or a specific line of operation (LOO). This ensures the EET is nested with the commander's intent.

When determining the Method, the FSO again refers to the completed TSM. The TSM's *detect, deliver* and *assess* functions all specify which asset(s) accomplish the function, the method used (in the form of task and purpose) and when the function will be accomplished. The EET Method paragraph must describe in detail how and when specific assets will affect an HPT through the targeting functions of *detect, deliver* and *assess*. A completed Method paragraph provides subordinates with a detailed concept of how specific actions fit into the plan to achieve a desired effect.

The Effect, determined during the *decide* function, describes in quantifiable terms what results define success in relation to the overall targeting objective. The measure of effectiveness (MOE) or measure of performance (MOP) indicators establish the standards by which the task will be accomplished. This provides clear guidance to subordinates to determine mission success.

It's important to note that the FSO is *not* deriving the information for EETs on his own or in a vacuum. Rather, it is the work of an integrated staff, led by the task force XO. The FSO merely compiles the information into a familiar format that is easily understood by subordinate leaders.

The FSO's critical output from the targeting meeting is draft EETs, which he helps develop during the meeting. These tasks are the cornerstone of the commander's plan to achieve specific targeting objectives. They are refined throughout the planning process and published in the fragmentary order (FRAGO), Paragraph 3a, Concept of the Operation, to tell subordinates how synchronizing lethal and nonlethal effects works to accomplish the commander's targeting objectives.

Wargaming: Achieve Synchronization of Effects. Unfortunately, many units stop planning after developing the COA. If COA development is done correctly, the plan is integrated, but it is not synchronized. If the goal of full-spectrum planning is to integrate and synchronize lethal and nonlethal effects on the battlefield to achieve the commander's intent, then the staff must synchronize the plan by conducting COA analysis or wargaming.

In the battle rhythm, Step 4 should be completed immediately after, or as a

Task = *Decide* (Focused on an HPT from the TSM)

Objective	Formation	Function

Disrupt the ability of AIF mortars in AO Scorpion to engage US forces with indirect fire.

Purpose = *Decide* (Maneuver-Focused)

To defeat AIF operating in zone.

Method = *Detect-Deliver-Assess* (From the TSM)

Detect: A FIST occupies OP 1(NP136987) NLT 070600MAR05 and observes TAI 1, primary observer AB2012 (Mtr 3 HE, AMC); Q-36 AOS 4800 mils from 2100-0100L from 7-9 Mar 05. A Co coordinates with Police Chief for joint patrol with Iraqi Police in Medina Jabal on 7 Mar 05.

Deliver: A Co conducts simultaneous combat patrol in TAI 1 and joint patrol with Iraqi Police from 2100-0100 to locate AIF mortar teams and equipment. Mtr Plt laid on AB2012 (Mtr 3 HE, AMC). PSYOP team delivers leaflets in Medina Jabal NLT 1300 7 Mar 05, describing how AIF mortar activity in Medina Jabal puts innocent people in danger.

Assess: A Co conducts a patrol to counterfire grid (if fired) and assesses BDA and conducts debrief with TF S2/FSO upon completion. A Co negotiates with the mayor of Medina Jabal NLT 1300 8 Mar 05, focusing on continued joint patrols and status of AIF mortar activity in Medina Jabal.

Effect = *Decide* (MOE from TSM)

AIF mortars are disrupted by 75% reduction of indirect fire attacks in AO Scorpion.

Legend: **AMC** = At My Command **HE** = High Explosive

Figure 4: Sample EET derived from Item #1 of the TSM in Figure 3. Note that the "Method" includes nonlethal as well as lethal actions to accomplish the targeting objective.

continuation of, the targeting meeting. The entire battle staff must be present as each BOS synchronizes its efforts to accomplish the plan to counter the enemy's most probable COA.

While participating in the wargame, the FSO focuses on the fire support plan but must understand how critical nonlethal assets will be employed during the operation. Key doctrinal products that should emerge from the wargame are the S3's operations synchronization matrix, a refined TSM and refined EETs.

Because the nature of the operational environment generally demands a directed COA, a decision brief to the commander may not be necessary. However, the commander approves the plan before it is disseminated to subordinates in a FRAGO.

Complete the cycle. Completing the cycle requires publishing a detailed FRAGO that provides clear task and purpose to subordinate units, conducting detailed rehearsals to further synchronize the plan, executing the plan through the focused delivery and coordination of lethal and nonlethal effects and assessing the effectiveness of the plan (Steps 5, 6 and 7 of Figure 2).

Given the nature of the operational environment, it's important that commanders quickly and effectively communicate changes in the plan to subordinates. While tasking matrices are useful tracking tools, they are not doctrinal methods for communicating a plan. The FRAGO following the doctrinal five-paragraph format is the proven method to communicate a plan effectively to subordinates. This FRAGO should include all the annexes that provide the details necessary for subordinates to execute the plan.

After issuing the order, units rehearse the plan. The rehearsal should emphasize achieving the desired effects during the operation, to include the delivery and control of assets.

A combined arms rehearsal must include all assets participating in the operation. Each subordinate leader must understand how and when each asset supports the mission in time, space and purpose. Additional rehearsals may be needed to further synchronize the actions of specific assets (i.e. fire support, combat service support, ISR, etc.).

FSOs participate in rehearsals. At a minimum, the FSO must cover EETs and the fire support plan (purpose, targets, observers, communications, triggers, and fire support coordinating measures, or FSCMs). The FSO also must be prepared to rehearse the nonlethal effects concept (asset, task and purpose, IO themes and messages, negotiations, and projects and funds).

Photo by SPC Charles Gill, 55th Combat Camera (COMCAM)

A Soldier from 1st Battalion, 320th Field Artillery Regiment, 101st Airborne Division, hands out humanitarian and esprit items in Iraq. The FSO focuses on the fire support plan but must understand how critical nonlethal assets will be employed during an operation.

Successful execution often depends upon effective command and control. As the operation reveals the true nature of the battlefield, causing possible plan adjustments, key leaders must be positioned to control assets to adjust to the changing situation.

Clearly the commander's location is critical during execution, but he also must consider the FSO's location. With communications platforms and personnel assigned at the company level and higher, the FSO brings a unique and desired capability upon which the commander can capitalize. Task force commanders gain more visibility and control of assets if assets are coordinated through their fire support organization.

Full-spectrum operations require commanders and staffs at all levels to apply the elements of combat power in a way that ultimately synchronizes effects on the battlefield. The constantly changing operational environment requires leaders, including the FSO, to anticipate change and adapt to the situation. However, they can implement change without losing sight of the current doctrinal framework in which they plan, prepare, execute and assess combat operations. Units likely will achieve success in full-spectrum operations by focusing on gaining and maintaining information superiority through the continuous integration of the MDMP and targeting processes and in the context of a cyclic battle rhythm that addresses each phase of the operations process.

Likewise, the FSO must recognize his evolving role on the maneuver task force battle staff and exactly how he fits into each phase of this complex process. He must not lose sight of his ultimate purpose as the commander's representative for coordinating fires on the battlefield, but he must understand how to fulfill his role in the ever-changing operational environment.

A confident task force FSO, competent in his duties, is key to achieving desired effects in full-spectrum operations.

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